

THE 1990 PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS—PART 1, REPORT

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The Society's 118th year of existence has been one dominated by the problems of the future. At the end of 1989, as all will be aware, the Society was forced by circumstances to vacate its premises at South Audley Street and seek out pastures new. A very many great efforts have been made by members of the Council (whose proceedings I have been privileged to chair for the last year), in finding us a new location, and I must in particular pay tribute to the dedicated efforts of these people. It is hard to single out any one individual without, possibly, offending others whose time and labour are no less significant. However, the stalwart efforts of Peter Chandler, (whose negotiations on our behalf concerning the possibility of moving the Society's "home base" to Dinton Pastures, near Reading, have relieved me of a great deal of personal effort and travel at a time when my domestic situation would have made that rather problematical), deserve a personal thank you.

I am aware that there are some members who would say that a move outside London is not a good idea; indeed the view has been expressed quite strongly on Council itself by one or two of its members. Whilst respecting these views, and agreeing that any opposing view is essential to proper function in a democracy, I feel it is important to remember that we choose to call ourselves the BRITISH Entomological and Natural History Society. In order to fill the role of a national body we must make ourselves accessible to members resident across the length and breadth of the British Isles and not just to 'the London crowd' (of which, let me hasten to add, I count myself as a member). Whilst I can see no reason myself why a truly national organization should not operate effectively from a London base, I can, equally, see no reason why it should not operate just as well from elsewhere. I find myself in the paradoxical situation, therefore, of supporting the Council's policy to move the Society's base to an area of the country which would effectively prevent me from making all but the rarest of personal appearances.

It should be added that exhaustive attempts have been made by members of your Council to locate a suitable central London base—one where we could not only hold regular meetings, but where the collections and library, our two greatest assets, could also be housed in a fully accessible manner. Yet, we have been foiled in our endeavours by both non-availability of suitable rooms and the exorbitant costs of those which come somewhere near the desired requirements. True, we have considerable financial assets, but the annual rentals offered are far in excess of the interest which would accrue on our capital over the same period. I think it would be very unwise, therefore, to spend what we have now on a venue which we could not afford to keep beyond the next ten years or so, whereupon we would find ourselves in exactly the same situation again but without the financial where-with-all to do anything about it! However, it is not too late, even now. If any member could suggest to me this evening a suitable London room at an affordable rent I can promise you that it will be thoroughly investigated.

Sadly, six members will be unable to contribute to the debate on the future, having passed away to that great collecting ground in the sky.

Mr R. E. M. PILCHER joined us as a member in 1976, expressing an interest in Lepidoptera, Coleoptera and Trichoptera, and died on 30 December, 1989. Throughout his long life he had a deep interest in entomology and will be particularly

remembered for his discovery of the marsh moth *Athetis pallustris* in Lincolnshire. His many other contributions to the knowledge of Lincolnshire Lepidoptera have proved of immense value to that county's Conservation Trust.

Mr D. B. FURMAGE died in April, 1990, having become a member in 1983 expressing an interest in entomology. He was a resident of the Southampton area, but I have been quite unable to glean any details of his life and works, beyond noting that he was an active member of his local natural history society.

Dr K. C. GREENWOOD joined the Society comparatively recently, in 1985. As a medical man he had a general practice at Pailton, near Rugby and in spite of a life-long interest in medical entomology he did not take up the study of Lepidoptera until 1981. Between then and his death on 16 January, 1990, he amassed an impressive collection of 40 drawers of Warwickshire moths—both macro and micro. Over the same period he also accumulated 110 drawers of beautifully set and fully labelled butterflies and moths from Costa Rica, Equador and south-east Asia, together with an estimated 10 000 papered specimens he had intended to set during retirement. His entire collections and notebooks passed, on his death, to the Coventry Museum.

Mr R. F. BRETHERTON was probably one of the more well known and undoubted expert lepidopterists of the present century. He joined as a member in 1947, and became our President in 1967. He also served the Society for many years as Treasurer and, in 1972, his efforts on our behalf were recognized when he was afforded Honorary Membership. His death a few weeks ago, followed that of his wife, who passed away only a week before. He had a lifelong interest in Lepidoptera and contributed greatly to the text of *The moths and butterflies of Great Britain and Ireland* (Harley Books). He was probably best known as the author of *The Macrolepidoptera of the Oxford district* (1939) and of *The Macrolepidoptera and Pyraloidea of north-west Surrey* (1955) as well as co-author (with Michael Chalmers-Hunt), of the annual review of immigrant Lepidoptera in Britain. His impressive Lepidoptera collection will go to Reading Museum.

Lt. Col. D. M. CHAPPEL died suddenly during 1990 in his late forties. He joined as a lepidopterist in 1973 and collected mainly in the area around Pewsey, Wiltshire where he lived. His daily twenty-mile drive to the station to catch the train to work in London, and the return journey in the evening, gave him little time to pursue his entomological interests but he was never the less an active person locally. I have been unable to ascertain what is to become of his collection.

Mr J. BRIGGS lived at Beetham in Cumbria. He joined our Society in 1979 as a lepidopterist and was an extremely active and competent local naturalist known to many of us here this evening. He died in his 86th year on 22 January, 1991. His extensive collection of Lepidoptera had already been donated to the Keighley Museum a year before.

We have already stood in memory of these gentlemen, and so I will not ask you to do so again.

In conclusion, I must offer my thanks to the members of Council whose opinions and guidance have made what could have been a very rough passage through this particular chapter of the Society's history a very smooth one indeed. I shall refrain from singling out any one person because I feel that all contributions, no matter how small, are important. I shall end with the suggestion that newer members, particularly younger ones, should seriously consider putting themselves forward for Council at the end of the new year which begins this evening; a careful blend of new and old can only be of lasting benefit to the Society as a whole.